Church Union News and Views

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of the
South India Joint Committee on Union

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News and Views

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Vol. III **MARCH 1933** **No. 5**

Editorials

Voting by Houses

One of the questions that came up again at the recent meeting of the Joint Committee on Union was the question of 'Voting by Houses.' Articles will be found on this subject in this Number. This is a matter that all members of all three Churches should consider most carefully and deliberately. None of us should approach the subject with a closed mind, but each one should ask 'What is the best way of carrying on the business of the Church after Union?' 'Shall major questions of doctrine and worship be settled by a majority vote of the whole Synod or Diocesan Council whichever is concerned or shall such a question be decided by a majority vote of each of the three groups of delegates composing such a body, namely, Bishops, Presbyters and Laymen?' In the Church of England the custom of 'Voting by Houses' has been followed for a long time, so that all Anglicans think that that is the best method of making these decisions. On the contrary in all the deliberative Assemblies of the Congregationalists and Presbyterians all such questions are decided by a majority vote in the

bodies having authority. Naturally the members of these Churches feel very strongly that this is much the better way of voting inasmuch as it does not permit any small group to determine the final results of such deliberations. It also appears to be much the more democratic method.

It is stated by some that in recent voting in the Church of England the laymen have been by far the more important and more conservative members and that they several times rejected proposals which had been forwarded by the Bishops as being too advanced and too modern. We do not know how general this experience is but on the surface it certainly looks as though a small House of bishops might by a majority vote prevent the legislation that was very much desired by a very much larger number of presbyters and laymen. In an Assembly or Synod voting as one body at least a majority must be in favour of a proposition in order to give it effect and in most cases where important legislation is undertaken a two-thirds or even three-fourths vote is demanded. However, if anyone can show clearly that 'Voting by Houses' is the better thing for a Church than a majority vote of all members sitting together, we ought to have an open mind to consider the question. Likewise, if any one can show that a democratic vote of the whole body sitting together is good for the Church, then we ought to have an open mind to consider that question also. Let us again seek for divine guidance in this matter, as we have in all others, in order that the outcome may be for the building up of the Kingdom of God.

The Acid Test

We take great pleasure in publishing a letter which the Rt. Rev. Bishop Palmer sent to the *Times* of London in December. The letter speaks for itself, but is a very strong vindication of the action which the Episcopal Synod took when it gave liberty of action to the members of the Joint Committee with reference to participation in Communion Services celebrated by non-Anglicans.

The paragraph with reference to the acid test of all Churches and Ministries is a very strong and Christian statement of essential truth. The Bishop is using modern scientific language in place of the figurative language of Jesus Christ Himself when he says 'The tree is known by its fruits'. How any group of men today can set up a theory which cannot be proven and then seek to judge their fellow-Christians by that theory is something that passes our comprehension. We are perfectly willing that men should believe whatever their conscience dictated to them, but we are not prepared to allow men even at the dictates of their conscience to compel others to believe theories that they cannot prove. Where there is general agreement that the facts are insufficient for any theories we are not prepared to have men interpret the lack of facts as they think best and then compel us to

believe. This applies to many doctrines by many sects of Christians but the sooner that kind of argument is given up the better it will be for the Church. There surely must be freedom where there is not certainty, and certainty must rest upon fact and not upon the interpretation of the lack of facts. We are delighted to know that Bishop Palmer has come out so strongly and so clearly for the truth. Surely all must give heed to his words in a matter like this.

Retreats and Publications

Within a short time several retreats and conferences on Church Union will be held in South India. The following may now be listed as times and places for retreats :—

Near Madras	March 29, 30, 31	C. J. Lucas, Esq., M.A., Viruthampet, via Katpadi.
Nagercoil	April 4-7	Rev. J. A. Jacob, Nagercoil, Travancore.
Palamcottah (Women's Conference)	April 7-9	Miss M. G. New, Bishopstowe, Palamcottah.
Pasumalai (For Ministers and Laymen)	April 18-21	Dr. J. J. Banninga, Pasumalai.
Telugu Area	(Date to be announced.)	Bishop of Dornakal.
Malabar Area	(Probably in August.)	Rev. A. Streckeisen, Calicut.

Much interest has been displayed in the whole Church Union Movement since the re-issue of the Proposed Scheme, and it is confidently expected that there will be large numbers present at these Conferences, and that they all will be of immense value to those attending them. For the most part these retreats will not deal with the technique of the Movement, but rather with the spiritual aspects and results. Much time will be spent in prayer and in fellowship. It is hoped that something of the fellowship that has been shared in the meetings of the Joint Committee may be present at these retreats also, and that both ministers and laymen will catch something of this spirit which will undoubtedly result from a union among the Churches.

Rev. H. Gulliford, Convener of the Publication Committee, is planning to issue shortly 'A History of the Church Union Movement', and also a pamphlet on the subject 'The Church in the Mind of Christ'. These pamphlets will be published in all the vernaculars of the uniting Churches. If you do not receive copies in the course of a few weeks please write to Mr. Gulliford for them.

Opposition to the South India Movement

During the Christmas holidays when most Christians were attempting to get into the spirit of peace and goodwill that usually betokens that season there appeared in the various British newspapers and periodicals a long series of letters and articles dealing with the South India Movement for Church Union. While many of these articles were in hearty support of the Union there were also a goodly number that were opposed to union largely because certain bishops and priests of the Church of England had partaken of Communion at the hands of their non-Anglican brethren. The Church of England Union which is composed of Anglo-Catholics has voted to oppose the Union Movement. On the other hand the Evangelical Society of the Church of England has definitely endorsed the movement. In one letter twenty of the bishops called for prayer that the Union may be successfully consummated. In another document something like 85 heads of schools and colleges as well as leading ministers endorsed the movement. It is a pity that a movement that should flow out of human love for God and for man and fellowship among men in the Church of Christ should call forth opposition that in some cases may be called bitter. Even when men stand on conscientious scruples there hardly seems to be room for any bitterness in the Church of Christ. Christ did bitterly attack the hypocrites, but surely those that are opposed to the South India Movement will not accuse those who led that movement of hypocrisy. All that they have done has been done openly and above-board. Their motives certainly have been straightforward. Even though we are in error, such error should better be corrected by loving admonition rather than by bitter attack. But there have been far more who have considered this movement to be of the Spirit of God than those who have considered it error. Consequently it behooves those who are opposed to this movement to give reasons for their opposition that will be sufficient to convince those who are in favour of the movement. If they cannot convince then it behooves them to go back and study their own theories to see whether they have a sufficient foundation to stand upon. In the meantime those who are carrying on these negotiations may go forward in the confidence that the majority of the members of the Churches in the homeland who are supporting the Missions involved in this movement are in favour of union, and that therefore they may look forward with every hope to the consummation of that union.

Conference With Anglican Communion

(From *Life and Work*, Church of Scotland)

The first conference between representatives of the Church of Scotland and the Anglican Communion was held on 22nd and 23rd November. There was a full attendance of members, and an official statement was issued to the press, the principal part of which read as follows :—

'It was agreed that the appeal to all Christian people issued by the Lambeth Conference of 1920 and cordially welcomed by the Assemblies of the then separated Scottish Churches in 1921 and 1922, formed the necessary starting point of conference.

'That, however, as the Archbishop of Canterbury had said in his address to the Assembly in May last, need only suggest the general spirit and outlook with which the conferring parties should enter upon their task. It was no part of the business of the conference to negotiate terms of union between the Churches or of amalgamation under one and the same form of government. Rather the aim should be to ascertain, in view of the clamant needs of the time, the common ground of Christian faith and purpose on which they stood, and to consider ways and means by which, as branches of the Church adhering to the Reformation, and with national responsibilities to discharge, they might assist one another in their common witness and service at home and abroad. Matters of difference between the Churches would emerge in due course, and would be more profitably examined at a later stage.'

Articles

Some Notes on the Christian Ministry with Special Reference to Apostolic Succession in the Sub-Apostolic Age

By the Rev. Canon H. J. EDMONDS, Madras

The fundamental truth in all discussions concerning Union must be that the Church is God's creation : the revelation is His : the ministry is Christ's gift to the Church : the Church itself is the Body of Christ. In this article we are discussing shortly the ministry which He gave and trying to discover His purpose and guidance in its origin and preservation in His Church.

What is Apostolic Succession?

Christ in founding His Church, founded also a ministry in the Church in the persons of His Apostles. In the capacity of founders under Christ

they had a *temporary* function, such as bearing the original witness to Christ's resurrection and making the original proclamation of the Gospel. But underlying this was another—a pastorate of souls, a stewardship of divine mysteries. This office was intended to become *perpetual* by being transmitted from its first depositaries, so that in each generation there should be an authoritative stewardship of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ and a recognized power to transmit it, derived from above, by Apostolic descent. The men who were to hold the various offices would receive their authority to minister in whatever capacity—their qualifying consecration—from above, in such sense that each ministerial act would be performed under the shelter of a commission, received by the transmission of the original pastoral authority which had been delegated by Christ Himself to His Apostles.

Is it a right development?

It has been said that Church History enters a tunnel about A.D. 66 and emerges again about the middle of the second century A.D. From that time we see clearly a ministry of bishops, presbyters and deacons in the universal Church, which has taken the place of the primitive Apostolic ministry. But the New Testament does not lead us to suppose that the functions exclusively discharged by the *general* or *Apostolic* order in the first days, were to lapse altogether, so that the Church of the second century would have to re-develop an Apostolic order of bishops from below. We can believe that it was a part of the Divine plan that the Apostolic order of the New Testament should have taken shape in the episcopal successions of the Churches when the dim period of history has passed away. The evidence of the Apostolic age, and what glimpses are afforded in the following dim years go to show that this development of the ministry issued normally into the state of things with which all were familiar in the age of Irenæus, in the second half of the second century A.D.

However, if the enquirer is guided by a disinterested passion for historical truth, in marshalling the evidence for Apostolic succession before A.D. 100, he is bound to begin by candidly acknowledging that it is insufficient either to prove or to disprove it.

The evidence is equally insufficient to prove or disprove the Presbyterian contention that the power to transmit ministerial authority was vested in all on whom it had been conferred. The controversy lies between these alternatives : the evidence does not support the Congregationalist theory of the ministry.

The Catholic, in appealing to history, can justly frame his argument on these lines :—

> When we can at last take our stand on clear and indisputable evidence, i.e. about A.D. 150, we find that the bishop not only has exclusive

authority to ordain, but is the normal minister of all the sacraments: therefore *the burden of disproving the Apostolic origin of this prerogative of the Episcopate rests upon those who deny that the possession of the three-fold ministry is the guarantee of the validity of the Church's sacraments.*

He can further appeal to the fact that there is no recorded instance in the Apostolic age of Presbyters ordaining apart from an Apostle or Apostolic man.

Again he can urge the *a priori* objection—a very cogent one indeed—that in later ages, where conditions have been similar to those which prevailed in the first century (e.g. amongst other things good and easy communications) a Presbyterian organisation has been found to work so satisfactorily that of all Protestant bodies, the Presbyterians are the most tenacious of their own type of ministry. It is hard to believe that, if there had been Apostolic sanction to this method, it would not have emerged on a wide scale and remained. But in the second century there appears to have been no controversy, amongst the wide-spread branches of the Church, as between an Episcopal and a Presbyterian mode of succession.

The subject is inextricably confused because in discussing the origin of Episcopacy and Episcopal ordination more than one question is at issue.

We will formulate the enquiry in three questions :—

I

Does the evidence from, and with regard to, Apostolic and sub-Apostolic ages, support the view that the monarchical episcopate was established by the Apostles?

From the Acts of the Apostles we know that the Mother Church of Jerusalem had a type of organisation which developed under the eyes of the Apostles. In two generations, probably with the approval of the surviving Apostles, it became fixed in Syrian Antioch and Western Asia Minor, and presently appears everywhere. It is reasonable to suppose that this represents the main line of development.

(We must believe that in the Acts we have a genuine reproduction of the primitive tradition of the ministry and it is greatly moulded on Old Testament ideas, but space does not admit of developing this point.)

From the Acts we learn that the activities of prophets and presbyters in the early days of the Church were under the supervision of the Apostles (St. Paul, highly as he esteemed prophets, took care to regulate their ministrations at Corinth). The Mother Church at Jerusalem sent delegates,

Apostolic men and prophets, to supervise the Church at Antioch (Acts xi. 22, 27). Nowhere is there a sign of an independent local Church with no Apostolic supervision.

In St. Paul's Epistles we note the claim of the Apostle to plenary powers as founder and superintending missionary (1 Cor. iv. 17). 'For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy. . . . . who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every Church'; 'and so ordain I in all the Churches' vii. 17; 'If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord.' xiv. 37.

But under the Apostle were subordinate missionaries who often acted as delegates, armed with his authority. Such were Timothy, Epaphroditus, and Titus. St. Paul and these helpers stood for the authority of the Church at large.

In the local churches, such as at Philippi are two main orders of ministers holding the office of Presbyter and Deacon, or, to denote their functions, Episcopi and Deacons: those who have oversight, and those who serve.

In writing to the Corinthians St. Paul refers in general terms to the ministry of the Church at large and gives no clear indication as to the local ministry: he is dealing with internal discipline. Again in the Epistle to the Romans references to the ministry are couched in general terms. He speaks of prophecy; ministry (diakonia): he that teacheth; he that ruleth. (Rom. xii. 7-8.)

Ephesians refers to Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

In the Pastoral Epistles (to Timothy and Titus) we come across the need of discipline and sound teaching which can be assured only by a regularised ministry in each local Church, this ministry being appointed by, and responsible to, Apostolic men, representing the Church at large, in whom is vested the authority formerly belonging to the founder. This is to ensure sound church ways after the Apostle's guiding influence is removed. Whether the Epistles are entirely by St. Paul or not, the early Church certainly considered these provisions and regulations were according to the mind of St. Paul.

The majority of scholars hold that the Pastoral Epistles in the New Testament identify the *Presbyter* with the *Episcopus*, but too little weight is often given to the arguments of those who take the contrary view.

The strongest argument in favour of their identification is the fact that in Titus i. 5-9, the author of the Epistles bids Titus ordain *Presbyters* in every city, and then goes on to give a list of qualifications of the *Episcopus*. 'For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that were wanting and appoint Presbyters in every city, as I gave thee charge . . . . . For the *Episcopus* must be blameless as God's steward . . . . . '

But those who contend that the Pastorals draw a distinction between the *Episcopus* and the *Presbyter*, urge that the term *Presbyters* is always found in the plural (with the exception of I Timothy v. 19, where it means 'an older man'), whereas *Episcopus* is always singular and has the article. Titus i. 7, need only imply that the *Episcopus* was selected from the Presbyters. The Pastorals are not a systematic treatise on the sacrament of Orders and a gap in the logical sequence is quite characteristic of the informality of a letter.

Most people agree that James, the Lord's brother, was, at Jerusalem, a bishop in the strict sense of the term. On his death (A.D. 62.) Symeon, also a kinsman of the Lord, was appointed in his place and ruled till early in the second century. Hegesippus, 'the father of Church History', who wrote in the second half of the second century, and whose works are preserved by Eusebius, probably lived in the time of Symeon. He was a traveller and made a list of the names of the succession of bishops in various centres. Symeon's appointment is represented as having the sanction of our Lord's Apostles and there is no reason to doubt this. In favour of a positive answer to this question we can add the really strong concurrence of testimony from the end of the second century, which connects the establishment of the episcopate in Asia Minor with the later years of St. John, but of course this argument is precarious, because it is really no more than a probability that St. John who spent his declining years at Ephesus was the Apostle of that name. Clement of Alexandria distinctly states that St. John went about from city to city, his purpose being 'in some places to establish bishops, in others to consolidate whole churches, in others again to appoint to the clerical office some one of those who had been signified by the Spirit' (Quis Dives 42). Tertullian in his treatise against Marcion (IV. 5) likewise says with reference to Asia Minor 'The sequence of bishops traced back to its origin will be found to rest upon the authority of John'.

An earlier writer still, in the 'Muratorian Fragment' speaks of St. John's 'fellow-disciples and bishops' gathered about him.

The Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch furnish conclusive evidence that the monarchical episcopate was established in the cities of Asia Minor and Syria by the beginning of the second century A.D. but Ignatius nowhere states

that the bishop is the successor of the Apostles: he regards him rather as the representative of Christ.

Attention is called to a much neglected argument to be found in such a book as Hamilton's 'The People of God', Vol II. *The Church*, which very convincingly traces the origin of the historic episcopate and diaconate to the need of a permanent celebrant and assistant at the Eucharist. Once this theory is accepted it furnishes a most illuminating clue to the interpretation of all the early evidence. In the early Church distinctions of ministry are undoubtedly chiefly marked by the functions which each Order performed at the Eucharist. What the evidence from A.D. 150 onwards reveals is not the evolution of the bishop from the presbyters, but the devolution of the sacerdotal authority of the bishop upon the presbyter. In the letters of Ignatius the bishop is the normal minister of the sacraments. (Ep. Smyrna 8).

In the letters of Cyprian the bishop is invariably designated by the title 'Sacerdos' and the presbyter only celebrates the sacraments in exceptional circumstances, and then he acts as the bishop's deputy.

Incidentally, the New Testament does *not* eschew the language of sacerdotalism. Both St. Paul and St. Luke speak of the Christian minister as a 'leitourgos' which in the Septuagint is a synonym for 'priest'. (Rom. xv. 16; Acts xiii. 2). It would have been misleading to use 'hiereus' so long as the Jewish Temple was standing. [Rom. xv. 16: 'because of the grace that was given me of God, that I should be a *minister* (leitourgos) of Christ Jesus unto the Gentiles, *ministering in sacrifice* the Gospel of God . . . . . ']. There is also the general tenor of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The above consideration of the devolution of sacerdotal authority has an important bearing on the controversy between those who maintain the parity of ministers and those who assert that the proper channel for the transmission of ministerial authority is a single chief minister in whom alone the plenitude of priestly power resides.

II

Is the tradition, that the jurisdiction conveyed by the laying on of hands is essential to a valid administration of the Eucharist, primitive?

We can assert with the strongest emphasis that there is not a shred of evidence in the New Testament which justifies any one in maintaining that the ministry of the Apostles has survived in the Episcopal bodies, and the ministry of the prophets has been revived in the non-Episcopal bodies. Infinite confusion has been introduced through the coining of the term 'Charismatic' to describe the ministry of the prophets. In the Apostolic

writings any power whatever of helping the body of Christ was called a 'charisma' and the real question that has got to be answered is not 'Whether prophets were ordained or did the prophetic gift *per se* confer authority to perform the functions otherwise assigned to ordained ministers?' but : 'What functions of ministry required the special charisma or jurisdiction which the laying on of hands conveyed?' To this question the Didache (X. 7) and the Epistles of Ignatius seem to give contradictory answers, but the subsequently undisputed prevalence of the Ignatian answer at least suggests that that was more consonant with tradition. New Testament prophecy was definitely opposed to schism and the New Testament prophets were zealous promoters of unity, and on one occasion at any rate, co-operated in the selection of a candidate for the laying on of hands (1 Tim. iv. 14).

The Primitive Church did *not* recognise the distinction between the official Church and the Church of the Spirit, which was first made by the Montanists.

III

Did the power of ordaining to the ministry belong to others in the sub-Apostolic age besides the officer who was later exclusively denoted by the title bishop?

The distinctive functions of the historic Episcopate are two :—(*a*) the Bishop is the supreme ruler of the Church within a particular territory, and his diocese is the normal unit of the Church's organisation : (*b*) he is the sole agent for perpetuating the ministry of the Church in uninterrupted succession from the Apostles.

Presbyters appear to have been associated with the Apostle at ordinations, but in St. Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus it would not appear that such co-operation was essential or universal.

The opponents of the doctrine of Apostolic Succession maintain that this second prerogative was not originally restricted to a single officer but belonged to the whole body of Presbyters, appealing to two pieces of evidence.

A. CHAPTER 44 OF THE EPISTLE OF ST. CLEMENT OF ROME.—This was probably written about A.D. 96 in the name of the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth. The argument is that a Church cannot be a law unto itself : it was responsible to the whole Church. The Corinthian Church had formerly obeyed its rulers but at the instigation of a few malcontents, it had been disloyal to the Presbyters. The Corinthians should be at 'peace with the Presbyters set over' it and 'submit to the Presbyters'. This admonition is backed by an appeal to the well-known facts regarding

the Apostolic origin of the ministry. Clement proceeds (Chapter 44 : 1-5) :— 'Our Apostles also knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be contention about *the title of the Episcopate*. Therefore on this account, having received perfect fore-knowledge they appointed the aforesaid (bishops and deacons) and subsequently gave an additional injunction that, if they fell asleep, other *approved men* should succeed to their ministry. They, then, who were appointed by those (Apostles) or subsequently by *other eminent men* with the consent of the whole Church, and who had exercised their ministry blamelessly to the flock of Christ with humility, quietly and without display, and have had good witness borne them by all again and again, these we do not think to be justly cast out of the ministry. For it will be no small sin to us if we cast out of the episcopate those who have blamelessly and holily offered the oblations. Blessed are those presbyters who passed on their journey before, for they made their departure with good fruits and completeness : for they have no cause to fear lest any one remove them from their determined place. For we perceive that you have removed some, though their conversation was honourable, out of the ministry which had been observed by them without reproach'.

If the Episcopi and the Presbyters are identical it is hard to know why Clement used different words to convey the same meaning. The structure seems clearly to indicate that the 'eminent men' have a status surpassing that of the local ministry. The local ministry had been appointed by (*a*) the Apostles and (*b*) by 'other eminent men'. In each case the agents seem to belong to the Church at large. 'Eminent men' may be legitimately taken to mean 'Apostles' in the wider sense of Apostolic men, or, possibly the prophets of the Universal Church, and Clement speaks of 'rulers' as distinct from 'Presbyters'.

The position of Timothy and Titus after the death of St. Paul was precisely that of Clement's 'eminent men'.

This would mean that at Corinth, in the last decade of the first century, all episcopi were presbyters, not all presbyters were episcopi. The episcopi, rejected by the malcontents owed their appointment to officers with a super-local status. The laity had not given them their authority and the laity could not take it away.

An Apostolic Succession is clearly indicated in the sense not of mere succession to office, but of a transmission of ministerial authority, and also an Episcopal Succession of 'eminent men' with power to appoint new ministers. The ministers of the Church derive their authority from the one mission by which Christ came forth from God and the Apostles from Christ : in virtue of which these same Apostles appointed bishops and deacons in the Churches which they first founded, and afterwards took measures to secure the perpetuation of their office in due succession.

Clement gives thus two principles which involve the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession : (1) the principle that the Church is a differentiated body in which different individuals exercise different and clearly defined functions; and (2) the principle that the rights to exercise these functions, so far as they are ministerial, is derived by succession from the Apostles.

B. The opponents of the doctrine of Apostolic Succession also appeal to the statement of *Jerome* (died A.D. 420.) E.P. 146) that at Alexandria until the middle of the third century the presbyters were accustomed to appoint or ordain as bishop one chosen out of their own number. The word used is ambiguous but other sources seem to confirm the theory that the Patriarch was consecrated, not merely elected by the presbyters. He does not say, however, that the presbyters ever ordained anybody else, e.g. other presbyters : the bishop would do that.

Jerome's account of what happened 150 years before finds no confirmation in the writings of Origen who was contemporary with the supposed change in the manner of appointment of the Bishop of Alexandria. Nor does Eusebius confirm it, and the whole thing may be an echo of the obviously false reports circulated by the Arians that Athanasius himself had been consecrated only by Presbyters.

But if the evidence establishes the contention that in the sub-Apostolic age the power of ordaining to the ministry belonged to others besides the officer who was later exclusively denoted by the title bishop, yet this admission does not substantiate the Presbyterian contention. For the question whether Episcopacy was the most primitive form of Church *government* is quite distinct from the question whether authority to ordain belonged to the local officer later denoted exclusively by the title of bishop, and to him alone. The doctrine of Apostolic Succession does not necessarily require that the *ordaining* Episcopate should be identical with the *Monarchical* Episcopate. Many persons are ordained by Assistant Bishops and in the Celtic Church often the abbot ruled whilst the bishop was under obedience to the abbot, but performed episcopal functions. All that is required is that the power of ordaining should be derived by uninterrupted devolution from the Apostles and that the accepted agent of this devolution in the first age should have included only those who had received such power from the Apostles. If in some parts of the Church those called Presbyters actually possessed the power of ordaining, this can only mean that they were bishops in the Catholic sense of the word.

So far as we can see, in the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic ages no individual presbyter ever ruled a Church, nor did a college of presbyters function without oversight (episcope) of either the larger Church, or later a local bishop. We cannot now reproduce the exact institutions of the Apostolic age. The Church of the first centuries took a series of momentous steps, of which the acceptance of the Old Testament, the observance of the first day of the week, the adoption of Episcopacy, the formulation of the faith

in Creeds, and the fixing of the New Testament Canon were the most important. Episcopacy was accepted by the close of the Apostolic ages by Apostolic sanction, and the authority for this is stronger than that of the 'border-line' books of the New Testament.

This ministry has through the ages been regarded as having a divine authority for its stewardship of Christian mysteries, an authority derived not from below but from above, and it represents and perpetuates by due succession from the Apostles, the institution of Christ.

The Vote by Houses

In the course of drafting the proposed constitution for the Church of South India we have reached a matter of some difficulty. The point at issue is the responsibility and powers of the Bishops in safeguarding the doctrine and order of the Church. At bottom the question is: in the guarding of the purity of the faith, is there any differentiation between the various members of the Body, or, in this respect, have all members the same function?

We need to remember that in this matter, in the episcopal churches, bishops have always exercised most important powers. Indeed the preservation of the faith in its purity has always been regarded as one of their principal functions. As far back as the second century Irenæus wrote: 'In the succession of bishops tracing their decent from the primitive age and appointed by the Apostles themselves, you have a guarantee for the transmission of the pure faith'. (In fact for long it was this, and not the supposed transmission of sacramental grace, which was claimed to be the special merit of 'apostolic succession'!)

Accordingly, through fifteen centuries of Church history, the bishops have been regarded as the guardians of the Church's faith and doctrine. They were the essential members of the higher ecclesiastical councils. At least in Œcumenical Councils the bishops alone voted, though presbyters might be present and be consulted. Even in Provincial Councils, while presbyters have the right to attend and speak, it is doubtful whether any but the bishops actually voted. The particular phrase generally used is that 'the bishops decided, the presbyters sitting with them, the deacons and the laity standing by'.

It will then be evident how great a change would have been effected in the office of a bishop if it should ever become possible for bishops to be voted down by presbyters and laymen on a point of faith or order. The episcopate will then have lost one of its essential functions and characteristics. Yet this is what may happen if the proposed constitution keeps its present form.

But it is equally evident that to leave to the bishops, and to them only, the simple power of absolute veto would run right against all the accumulated experience and conviction of both the presbyterian and the congregational churches. The question comes, *is it possible to allow to presbyters and laymen their due share in the determination of the Church's faith and doctrine, without depriving the episcopate of its distinctive responsibility in this regard?*

There seems a simple and obvious way of doing so, a way that is surely none the worse because it happens to have the sanction of the usage of many centuries. It is known as the 'vote by Houses' (or Orders). That is, that on matters which touch the doctrine or essential organisation of the Church the votes of these three essential elements in the Church's life and membership, (bishops, presbyters and laity), are recorded separately (or by 'houses') that it may be certain that the motion carries the genuine approval of each of the three Houses. Bishops, presbyters and laity vote separately and the motion must have a majority in each of the three Houses, or it drops. None of the three elements can be coerced or overridden by the other two. While then, in matters of doctrine, initiative and formulation will be a natural function of the bishops, the other elements of the Church must be persuaded, not coerced. This procedure assures to the experts their proper place, but it is the Church as a whole, and not the experts only, that decide. (Is not this the essence of the best political theory today?)

The vote by houses thus secures that no doctrinal statement can be made without the approval of the Bishops; but it also secures that the Bishops must carry the genuine assent of the other orders; for clergy and laity have exactly the same powers of veto as themselves. In a word it seems to be an admirable combination of the aristocratic and democratic principles. Nothing can be done without the assent both of experts and people. (Without the vote by Houses, the experts may be voted down : which way lies disaster!) At the same time, so far as the power of veto goes, all three orders stand on the basis of equality. Each element in the Church has to be persuaded, not voted down. It thus safeguards the rights of minorities, and in much simpler fashion than the complicated modern machinery of proportional representation.

Instead of this most simple device our proposed constitution has the very complicated and involved precedure detailed in Chapter IX. 21, 22 : a procedure elaborate and tedious to a degree that will be positively irritating and likely to be the frequent cause of embittered controversy; and it has not the sole merit for which it was designed and which alone could justify anything so cumbrous; for it must altogether fail to satisfy those who, as episcopalians, have been brought up to regard the bishops as the specially commissioned guardians of the Church's faith and doctrine.

Substitute for those clumsy paragraphs the brief and simple provision that on the most important points, bishops, presbyters and laity shall vote as separate Houses, and that a motion to pass must have a majority in each House, and you have all the safeguards that can reasonably be asked. You have a procedure which, in the place it assigns to the expert, in its requirement of the consent of the whole body, in its securing to all the equal right of veto, in its substitution of persuasion for coercion and in its protection of the rights of minorities, is abreast of the most modern political theory. At the same time it is wisely conservative. It ensures wide agreement before change is made in matters of the first importance. (And, in the steadily developing formulation of the faith and practice of the Church, is not such a measure of conservatism wholesome and indeed essential?) It carries the authority of ancient custom. It is approved by the experience of centuries. It sufficiently secures the essential functions and powers alike of the Episcopate and of the other orders. It is simple, natural and effective. Adopt it, and you may sweep away all the cumbersome machinery of rules 21 and 22 of Chapter IX.

Is it not worthwhile to consider once again whether the vote by Houses is not the simplest and healthiest way of securing what is needed for the discharge by the bishops of their ancient office and function, while yet ensuring that the episcopate thus protected shall always be constitutional and never autocratic?

AGRA W. E. S. HOLLAND

Voting by Houses

The Joint Committee on Union now asks the Churches to reconsider a matter that was regarded as settled. At its third meeting (1921) the Committee considered the question of Voting by Houses (of laity, clergy and bishops) in the Provincial Synod and referred the matter to a committee. The suggestion came from the Anglican side, being based on the practice in the Convocations of the Church of England, in accordance with which certain matters cannot be decided by a majority vote of the Convocation as a whole, but only by the votes of its members in three groups, any one of which might block the action proposed. At the next meeting (1923) it was reported that the opinions of the Councils of the South India United Church were definitely unfavourable to this form of voting. Nothing is stated in the records of the proceedings of the reasons for this unfavourable judgment, but from our recollection of the discussions we are in a position to say that the general feeling was that the proposed arrangement would not be helpful, and might prevent the Church from expressing its common mind. People were afraid that when the Church as a whole, as represented by its presbyters and unordained members of Synod, desired such

reforms, its desire might be frustrated through the action of a small number of conservatively minded bishops.

Anglicans might reply that the arrangement put no more power into the hands of the bishops than it put into the hands of either of the other groups, so that if, in some cases that might arise, the whole Church might be under the control of the bishops, the bishops in other cases might find themselves under the control of the laity. People still felt, however, that the arrangement was more likely to give power to the smaller body than to either of the larger bodies. They might have no objection to the Synod at times resolving itself into three committees, each of which might express its mind separately; but the final vote, it was felt, must be that of the Synod as a whole.

In view of this declaration by the S.I.U.C. the proposal was not pressed. At the time it came up there was no means of knowing the mind of the Wesleyans since they did not come into the negotiations till later; but it might be presumed that their view would be similar. Then why should the matter come up now?

The answer is that it comes as a suggested means of removing one of the few difficulties that still remain. It has been found that there was a good deal of dissatisfaction with the reservation of certain powers to bishops in Sec. VIII. C (7), in accordance with which no proposition concerning the faith and doctrine of the Church and certain other important matters could be adopted except in a form approved by the bishops sitting separately. Was not this, it was thought, inconsistent with the declaration of paragraph 4 (1) of the same section that 'the Synod is the final authority in all matters pertaining to the Church'? In view of this difficulty the matter was reconsidered at the meeting of the Committee in June of last year, and an attempt to meet the difficulty has been made by a provision that in the last resort the decision lies with the Synod, which, however, will make its decision only after the bishops and the Diocesan Councils have had full opportunity of expressing their views. When the matter came up again in December it was found that the Anglicans were doubtful if the proposed amendment would be acceptable to their General Council, and they asked if the other Churches would be willing to consider, as an alternative amendment, a proposal to have voting by houses. When it was pointed out that such a proposal had already been considered and rejected the question was asked whether it had been considered as an alternative to the proposals contained in the Scheme, which left so much power to the bishops. The answer was of course that it had not. The representatives of the non-Anglican Churches were not in a position to say what answer their Churches would give to the question if put in this way: 'You would like to limit the power of the bishops in the way now proposed. But if it is clear that this limitation will not be agreed to by the General Council would it not

be better from your point of view to accept the proposal to have voting by houses in all important matters, rather than give what you think undue powers to the bishops in certain specified matters? If you yield something to the bishops, they in turn yield a good deal to presbyters and laymen.'

This is the question referred to the Churches for consideration. Whatever the answer may be it is only fair that it should be carefully considered.

CONJEEVERAM. J. H. MACLEAN

Report on Recent Action of Episcopal Synod and Standing Committee

The Episcopal Synod and the Standing Committee of the General Council of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon met in Calcutta from January 29th to February 5th. The main business of this Joint Session was the consideration of the revised Scheme of Union and the subjects connected with the Union negotiations.

The action taken by the Bishops in regard to Intercommunion has, as our readers are aware, raised a storm both in India and in England. Opinions have been published both for and against this resolution by theologians and scholars of different schools of thought. Some of these have appeared in the *News and Views*. A great many Anglicans have recorded their definite opposition to such expressions of fellowship at this stage. An equally large volume of opinion has been expressed in favour of the action taken. A small section of the Church is so distressed at this that it feels conscientiously bound to oppose a Union Scheme which provides that any communicant member of any of the Uniting Churches is at liberty, after Union, to receive Holy Communion at any altar within the United Church. In many quarters it is honestly felt that this is clean contrary to the fundamental principles of the historic Churches. Those who feel thus have wanted time to study this whole question and wish to stop all negotiations for five years.

It was in such an atmosphere that this Synod met. We are most devoutly thankful to God for granting us peace and harmony and unanimous satisfaction in spite of these threatening clouds.

The Resolution on the subject of Intercommunion was unanimously passed in the following terms :—

'In view of the considerable anxiety which is felt in certain quarters concerning Resolution 9 of the Session of 1932 in which it was stated that, though the Synod could not endorse the reception of communion by members of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon from ministers of the Uniting

Churches, yet a majority of them would not call in question the action of such delegates as felt impelled to join *on certain specified* occasions in such communions, the Synod desires it to be clearly understood that :—

1. 'It has never been any action intended to convey, and it desires that it should not be interpreted as conveying, the impression that in its opinion the ministries of other Christian bodies, at present in separation from us, are of equally certain validity or identical with those of the Churches which have retained the succession of Bishops.

2. 'The passing of that Resolution has not in the least diminished the desire and intention of the whole Synod to do all in its power to secure that the ministry in the Church of South India, when it comes into being, should be a unified ministry under Bishops within the Historic Episcopate.'

The other request urged upon us from many quarters was that the negotiations should now be suspended for five years so that those who felt anxious about some of the implications of the Scheme might have time to study all the aspects of the question. The Synod did not feel called upon to take such an action, but sent a Message to the Diocesan Councils explaining the Procedure that would ordinarily be followed in this matter. Here is the main part of this Resolution :—

'In the opinion of the Synod and Standing Committee there still remain certain matters which call for fuller consideration, and these are set out in the Decisions appended hereto. Therefore there must be further sessions of the Joint Committee to consider these, and also any further suggestions which may come from the other negotiating bodies, before the Scheme itself can be regarded as having reached its final form.

'It is also to be noted that in the other negotiating bodies the procedure for the adoption of the Scheme of Union is not laid down in the same definite stages as in our Constitution, so that up to the date of our present meeting neither of them have taken action exactly corresponding with the vote of General Approval which the General Council passed in February 1932, and which has been communicated to Diocesan Councils.

'For these two reasons it is obvious that the motion of Final Adoption cannot be presented at the next Ordinary Session in 1935. It is possible that, within a year from now, the Joint Committee will have so far completed the Scheme that the Episcopal Synod and Standing Committee may be summoned again to receive the report of our delegation; and in that case the Standing Committee could postpone the Ordinary Session of the General Council to 1936 to enable it then to consider a motion of Final Adoption.

'Our Constitution provides that before the motion of Final Adoption comes before the General Council, votes of General Approval must have been received from Diocesan Councils. These votes will not be called for before that second meeting of the Episcopal Synod and Standing Committee. So

that it cannot be regarded as likely that the question of Final Adoption will come before the General Council earlier than a Special Session in 1937 or the ordinary session of 1938. In any case, two years' notice will be given to Diocesan Councils of the date of the General Council at which that motion will be submitted.

'We therefore now commend the Proposed Scheme to the consideration of Diocesan Councils together with the decisions which we have now passed upon it, and ask them to forward to the Metropolitan, for communication to our delegates, any suggestions which they desire to make for its further improvement.'

When these two matters were thus satisfactorily settled, the Synod gave itself to examine the revised edition of the Scheme and to see how far the instructions given to the delegates by the General Council of 1932 had been carried out. Here is what the Synod said on these various points :—

A. THE EPISCOPATE

(General Council 1932, Decision 17, 2 (*a*); Scheme of Union 1933, on p. 37, Ch. IV, 2; on pp. 58, 59, Ch. IX, 21, 22 on p. 83 Resolution.)

Decision 1. General Council 1932 Decision 17, 2 (*a*). That the General Council's instruction has been adequately carried out.

Decision 2. That it be an instruction to our delegates that they should endeavour to secure in the Scheme, by 'voting by orders' or other means, that in the Constitution the final responsibility for faith and order should rest with the Bishops.

B. THE PRESBYTERATE

(General Council 1932, Decision 17, 2 (*b*); Scheme of Union 1933, on pp. 24, 25, Ch. II, 9.)

Decision 3. That the General Council Instruction has been adequately carried out.

C. CONFIRMATION

(General Council 1932, Decision 17, 3; Scheme of Union 1933, on p. 8 Footnote; Lambeth Report 1930, p. 127.)

Decision 4. That the footnote be in the following words :—

The Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, while it does not wish to insist on the acceptance of Confirmation in the United Church as a pre-requisite term of Union, desires most earnestly to commend the use of it, not primarily as a service of admission to Holy Communion, but as a rite which from the time of the Apostles has been considered naturally to follow Holy Baptism, and through which this Church believes that a special gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed. This desire is further strengthened by experience of the benefits which individual members of the Church have received through

it and of the enrichment which it brings to the pastoral ministry of the Bishop.

D. THE CONSECRATION OF BISHOPS

(General Council 1932, Decision 17, 4; Scheme of Union 1933, on p. 26, Ch. II, 10 (iv); on p. 44, Ch. IV, 24.)

Decision 5. That, in view of the fact that the Lambeth Conference advised that Presbyters should not take part in the consecration of bishops and of the danger of disputes in the United Church if different customs prevail, the delegates be instructed to discuss the whole matter again and to secure in any case a fuller statement of the truth that God is the true Consecrator, acting through the appointed officers of this Church.

E. THE PLEDGE

(General Council 1930, on p. 41 (bottom) Opinion and Instruction 6 (*a*), Scheme of Union 1933 on p. 15, Basis of Union 16, last paragraph.)

Decision 6. That it is recognized that our delegates have secured by the re-wording adopted that the implicit intentions of the pledge have been made explicit, and that in that agreement all the Uniting Churches have definitely agreed that in its application to the Anglican Church every honest endeavour shall be made that to no former Anglican congregation shall a non-episcopal minister be appointed, or be sent for occasional celebrations of the Holy Communion, and that opportunities for securing the ministrations of episcopally ordained clergy will not because of the Union be withdrawn from any congregation which now enjoys such ministrations and further that, while no coercion can be applied to individual members of the Church, our Clergy, who have entered the United Church, shall have full liberty to continue to instruct their people in accordance with those principles, which they have received, in so far as they do not conflict with the governing principles of the United Church.

F. THE 30 YEARS PERIOD

(Scheme of Union 1933, on p. 14, Basis of Union, para. 16.)

Decision 7. That, in view of the fact that doubts have arisen concerning the meaning and intention of certain paragraphs in the revised Scheme of Union, and having discussed the points which had been raised and heard the explanations of the delegates, the Synod be asked to issue an explanatory letter to the Dioceses for their information. (This explanatory statement has been separately issued.)

G. RELATIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES

(Scheme of Union 1933, on p. 25, Ch. II. 10.)

Decision 8. That our delegates be instructed to endeavour to secure a redraft of the clause, 'nor make it a determining factor in its relation with other Churches,' with a view to making its meaning and implications clearer.

H. THE CREEDS

(Scheme of Union 1933, on p. 61, Ch. X. 4.)

Decision 9. That our delegates be instructed to secure a revision of the second paragraph of Ch. X, 4, so that the words after 'be used in worship' may be omitted.

J. 'NOTES' IN THE CONSTITUTION

(Scheme of Union 1933, on p. 22, Notes.)

Decision 10. That our delegates be instructed to discuss the Constitutional force of Notes in the Governing Principles of the Church and further to suggest the addition in Note (ii) of Ch. II, 4, of some such words as 'but no teacher is justified in teaching anything inconsistent with the formularies of the United Church' on the plea that it is in his opinion contained or implied in any such confession'.

The Joint Committee asked the opinion of all the three Churches on 'the possibility of the arrangement that in a vote on matters described in Ch. IX. Rule 21, the votes of the lay members, the ministers, and the Bishops in the Synod be taken separately and that a majority of each of these groups be required.'

The reply of the Synod is embodied in a lengthy resolution which we quote in full :—

Decision 2. With reference to the Resolution of the Joint Committee in paragraph 8 of the Report of its meeting in Madras in December 1932, the Joint Committee of the Episcopal Synod and of the Standing Committee of the General Council of India, Burma, and Ceylon replies to the Joint Committee as follows :—

Holy Scripture consistently teaches us that from the days of Moses onwards God has provided for the guidance of His people and their preservation from error by committing to chosen men a special authority for this purpose.

The Anglican Communion is accustomed to regard the Bishops as having had entrusted to them among other duties that of guarding the Church from error and preserving its Faith and Order, and it believes that in so regarding them it is conforming to the universal belief of the Catholic Church; and if this responsibility is not committed to the Bishops of the United Church, Anglicans would consider that the Bishops had been deprived of one of their most distinctive functions.

While we do not ask that the Bishops should be empowered to impose anything arbitrarily on the Church, we do greatly desire that they should have an opportunity of protecting the Church from false doctrine and from ill-considered changes of its order by entrusting them in the last resort with the power of disallowing any such proposals. We are not so much concerned to give this power to the Bishops alone (as was done in previous editions of the Scheme) and if the suggestion commends itself to the Uniting Churches, we should ourselves prefer the system of permitting the taking of separate votes of the Bishops, presbyters and laymen in the Synod and requiring that any motion concerning the Faith and Order of the Church should require a majority in each division of the Synod: but we do desire that the Bishops in the United Church should not be deprived of the opportunity of exercising the responsibility which we believe is laid on them at their consecration. They will not have been appointed in any arbitrary way: they will be men whom all believe to have been called by God to be Chief Pastors and Guardians of the Flock: and they will have been accepted as such by the free consent of those to whom they minister.

These matters will be taken up at the next meeting of the Joint Committee. We hope, by that time, the South Indian United Church and the Methodist Church will have also moved forward to consider the Scheme carefully and offer their constructive proposals to make the Scheme acceptable to all.

Church in India

THE BASIS OF UNION

(To the Editor of *The Times*)

Sir,

Your correspondents have cleared up a part of the present situation about the projected union of Churches in South India. The Lambeth Conference, the only existing body which represents the whole Anglican Communion, has told the Church belonging to the Communion in India to go on with this project: two large organizations of the Anglo-Catholic party in England have said, 'No; if we can prevent you, you shall not'. Have they reasons for this attitude?

Dr. Kidd and his fellow-signatories have answered questions quite properly addressed to them by members of the Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon on points related to the scheme. Their answers were drafted with a view to being widely circulated, and have been so circulated. They are sometimes described by the Anglo-Catholic Press as manifestos. The one

which you published last Saturday is too technical to be answered in detail in your columns. But I ask leave to present the issues that really matter.

The scheme for union in South India aims at maintaining 'the traditional ministry' of the Church. 'The historic episcopate,' it says, 'will be effectively maintained' in the United Church. No ordinations or consecrations will be made in that Church except by Bishops. It is not episcopal ordination from which the scheme departs, as Dr. Kidd wrongly wrote in your issue of December 31. What the scheme rejects is the theories that it is impossible that a Eucharist can take place without an episcopally-ordained minister, and that the Church must forbid any person in any circumstances to receive Communion from a minister not episcopally ordained. The scheme proposes to recognize the non-episcopal ministers of the Churches which enter the union as ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the United Church, and to allow anyone who wishes, but to compel no one, to resort to their ministrations. Those are the points which are anathema to the objecting Anglo-Catholics.

The acid test of a Church's life is whether it does convert pagans at home or abroad. The non-episcopal Churches have (to our knowledge) done as much of this work as the episcopal. Is it credible that they would have been enabled by God to do this if He had regarded their Communion services as acts of rebellion, imposture, or self-deception, or as empty forms? No, Sir, those who framed the scheme cannot believe that. They think that those Churches, their neighbours, if not their colleagues, in the conversion of India, were regarded by God as doing their best to fulfil His Son's command, and that He, by using their ministers in this Sacrament, has Himself consecrated them to it. So long as Churches are deliberately maintaining separation their members cannot with consistency or good conscience share the Sacrament of unity. But when all separation has been removed our brethren in India propose to accept these non-episcopal ministers from God's hands. They are strengthened in this judgment by observing that there is nothing in the New Testament, even where, as in I Corinthians and I Timothy and Titus, one would expect it, to show that the Apostles confined the presidency at the Eucharist to any class of persons, such as presbyters. The indications of the phraseology used (e.g. throughout the Acts) are against such an assumption. However widely or however long the opinion that the Eucharist cannot take place without an episcopally-ordained minister may have been held in the Church, it appears to be devoid of support from Scripture and inconsistent with the experience of the non-episcopal post-Reformation Churches. If this be genuinely arguable, that opinion cannot claim a higher position than that of a permitted opinion, and that position is what is accorded to it in the South Indian scheme. Any one in the united Church may teach it as his own opinion and act upon it, but he will not be able to teach it as the united

Church's doctrine, because, with nearly half its members not accepting it, it clearly will not be so. The last revision of the scheme, made at Madras last December, expresses this as follows :—

> The uniting Churches recognize that the act of union will initiate a process of growing together into one life and of advance towards complete spiritual unity. One essential condition of the attainment of such complete unity is that the members of the United Church should be willing and able to receive Communion equally in all its churches, and it is the resolve of the uniting churches to do all in their power to that end. But they are convinced that this can only take place on the basis of freedom of opinion on debatable matters and respect for even large differences of opinion and practice such as exist at present—for example, with regard to forms of worship or the conditions regarded as necessary for the valid celebration of Holy Communion.

Your readers can judge whether the Anglo-Catholics have not got in the scheme everything that it is reasonable for them to have. The Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon has always wished to carry them with it in this scheme. Long years of common labour and affection bind the Anglo-Catholics in that Church to her heart. But no man in the Church can ask for more than free opportunity to convert it to an opinion of his which is debatable. I affirm that it must be so treated because God's action in the non-episcopal Churches appears *prima facie* to be against the Anglo-Catholic view.

Your readers should also consider the scheme in its widest bearings. The division between Catholic and Protestant is the most potent reason why the Church has so little influence today and is not bringing the modern world to Christ, who alone can save it. That division is the strongest point in the devil's plan of campaign. Some obscure persons in South India are willing to make the first attempt to end that division. They are like men asking leave to go over the top. They know that they may die in the attempt, and that their attempt will fail if they are not followed. In other words, it is possible that the United Church will go wrong itself after union. It is also possible that the Churches in other lands will not follow the example and join themselves into one Church. Our fellow-Christians in South India are willing to take both these risks. Who says to them, 'Stop'? Those who do not wish to have to follow them. Who says to them, 'Go'? Who is it Who died deserted by all, to save all? Who is it Who wants one body with which to complete His saving work?

HENDRE, CHELTENHAM,
January 4, 1933.

EDWIN JAMES PALMER,
Bishop.

Church Union in North India

The following resolutions passed by the Bombay and Punjab District Synod of the Methodist Church, held in New Delhi, January 11th—18th, and endorsed by the North India Provincial Synod of The Methodist Church held at Jubbulpore, January 26th—28th, are interesting as expressing the present attitude of The Methodist Church in North India towards the question of Church Union.

It will be seen how urgent and important our brethren realise the question of Union to be. It is very necessary and desirable that more definite progress should be made in North India. We would co-operate with all who seek to attain the goal of Union, and support every movement that will bring its realisation nearer.

The Methodists in the North stand with their fellow Methodists in the South in that we rejoice in all that God by His Spirit has accomplished in the meetings of the Joint Committee, and in that we believe that the Proposed Scheme of Union does offer, perhaps with some modifications and additions to meet the requirements of the wider constituency of the North, a satisfactory basis of Union for all India. We also stand by the resolution of the All India Nagpur Conference held at Nagpur, November 7th—9th, 1931.

For this reason while rejoicing in the fellowship and communion we have with our brethren of the Methodist Episcopal and Baptist Churches and the United Church of Northern India we have felt ourselves unable to join with them in their Joint Council (in which they are seeking for what may be called a Federal Union) since they do not accept the South India Scheme as a possible basis of Union and no provision is made for the inclusion of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon. The vision is not big enough. We must work along lines that will ensure the closest possible union with our brethren in South India, and in North India we cannot be content with any scheme of Union which would practically preclude the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon any more than we should be with one that would shut out Methodist Episcopal, Baptist or Friend. It may be a longer road that we have to travel but we are certain it is the only sure road to take. Our brethren of the Methodist Episcopal Church have a special contribution to make in discussing the question of Episcopacy with our friends of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon. For these reasons we press for another meeting of the Round Table Conference.

ARTHUR J. REVNELL

RESOLUTIONS ON CHURCH UNION BY NORTH INDIA METHODISTS

Resolved that :—

(1) The members of the Synod rejoice at the progress of the Church Union schemes in North and South India. They believe that in both the schemes may be seen the guidance of the Spirit of God which is leading the Church of Christ in India to a realization and manifestation of the oneness in Christ Jesus of all Christian believers. The assertion of this oneness they regard as one of the greatest essentials of the Christian situation in India, with a view to the consolidation of the Indian Christian Church which is gravely weakened by its divisions, to the winning for Christ of educated India which regards these divisions as a form of caste, and to enable the Christian Movement in India to bring to bear all the principles of the Gospel of Christ on the Indian Social Reforms sure to follow in the wake of the new Indian Constitution.

(2) The members of the Synod would regard it as calamitous for the future of Indian Christianity if in the new India united and self-governing under any contemplated political constitution, the Christian Church had to do its work for Christ under the present crippling conditions of dis-union. The Synod therefore urges all our people to help by prayer and personal encouragement every possible scheme that advances this important matter, whether on the lines proposed in North India or on those in South India.

(3) While believing that organic union is the goal to be arrived at, the Synod believes that the journey to this goal would be immensely helped by a carfeully worked-out plan of Inter-communion which would show to Christian and non-Chirstian Indians alike our sole reliance on Christ as our Saviour.

(4) The Synod gratefully acknowledges that several important factors which it had previously insisted upon as necessary have been incorporated in the South India scheme and it assures the brethren in the South India Synods of the fullest possible support in the attitude they have taken as far as reports have made this known.

(5) Concerning the proposals for Union in North India the Synod would deprecate any possible scheme or any school of thought being excluded from future discussions, e.g., it would deprecate a tacit assumption that any scheme for organic Union similar to the South India scheme is impossible in the North just as it would deprecate the assumption that a scheme of Federation must be ruled out.

(6) The Synod wishes to place on record its conviction that whatever scheme for one Church in India may eventually be adopted a vital element

must be the provision for variety in types of worship, theological thought and practical service.

(7) As Methodists whose whole history has stood for experimental religion we believe that one United Church of Jesus Christ must emphasise that there are many circumstances and conditions in which the grace of God is to be recognised as working outside ordinary Ecclesiastical channels, that while Infant Baptism is valid sacramentally, it is not to be regarded as having the value or efficacy of what is called Baptismal Regeneration, and that while we believe in Church order in the sense of the absolute necessity of reverence and the recognition of proper Church authority we do not think sacerdotal claims are in accord with New Testament teaching which we believe shows the priesthood of all believers to be central in importance.

South India

By the Bishop of Gloucester in the '*Gloucester Diocesan Magazine*'

As I find that some of the Clergy in the Diocese are a little bewildered by the violent attack that has been made on the South Indian scheme, I should like to say a few words about it. The particular action which has been the occasion of this attack has been the fact that at a meeting of the Committee which was working at the scheme, some of the bishops and other members of the Church of England who were present, feeling how near they were approaching to Christian unity, met together in a common Communion service, at which the Communion was celebrated by a minister who was not in Episcopal Orders.

What are we to say with regard to such an action? I would like to say, to begin with, that we probably all agree on two things: The one the value and necessity for a united Church of a proper Episcopal ministry, and the other the undesirability of intercommunion between Christian bodies which have not attained any real unity.

Now I am perfectly prepared to defend the necessity of Episcopal Orders and Ordination, but I do not think that anything can justify us in saying that the Sacraments of those who have not Episcopal Orders are invalid and no Sacraments at all. I believe that the arguments in support of such a position are not for a moment tenable in the face of any sincere historical criticism. It would take too long to put out the evidence here, I will only say that the small knot of English Churchmen who are maintaining such a position have against them the whole body of competent historical scholars.

As regards Intercommunion, while we have no doubt as to what should be our ordinary usage, we may quite reasonably hold that too great rigidity

is not wise or desirable. The Lambeth Conference in Resolution 42 has recognised this, and when those who are meeting in conference have attained a real unity of spirit, the desire for such a Communion service in special circumstances as was celebrated became natural and, I think, legitimate. And I think that this, as far as I can judge, is in accordance with the sober tradition of the Church of England. To take one instance, Bishop Cosin communicated with the non-Episcopal Churches of the Continent. The rules and canons which are necessary for the ordinary government of the Church may be abrogated by the Church in order to promote its well-being.

The general position at present is this. The want of unity in Christendom is one of the greatest causes of the weakness of Christianity at the present time. We want to unite. It is our duty to bring about union. It is intolerable that rules of the Church, quite admirable in normal circumstances, should be looked upon as regulations which cannot be changed or altered and may thus be used to hamper the spiritual well-being of the Church.

I would like to make one more point. When union with the old Catholics and the Orthodox was being discussed, a certain section of the Church attacked it with great violence because it was supposed to be inconsistent with the Protestant traditions of the Church of England. Now that there is a proposal for wider union with non-Episcopal bodies, another section is attacking the proposal with great vehemence because it is at variance with the supposed Catholic principles of the Church of England. Is there not a broader and wider and saner Church which recognises the traditions which we have inherited, both from the Primitive Church, and from the Church of the Middle Ages, and the Church of the Reformation, but does not allow itself to be hampered in its wider movements by adherence to narrow and particular rules? Surely we are a living Church.

Equality and Brotherhood

(A Statement of the new Christian Adventure in the Recognition of the Equality of all Christians before God and in the Practice of Brotherhood with all Christians as expressed by the Christian Unity League.)

[Many of our readers will be glad to have fuller information about the Christian Unity League, which is having such a large influence in America. We are glad to republish this statement, prepared by Rev. Peter Ainslie, D.D., the founder of the League.—Ed. *Church Union News and Views.*]

The entire policy of denominationalism, without the Spirit of Christ, stands in as great confusion as do politics, economics, and morals. We are not concerned with the past. All the denominations, Protestant and Catholic, started with good purposes in their search for truth, but this truth has

now become the property of all. A new day is here. The result is that the generating power of the denominations is running down and there is no method for its restoration other than finding the generating power of Equality before God and Brotherhood among all Christians. This means lessening the place of denominationalism and increasing the place of the reality of Christian experience, which will take us far beyond where we are toward a united Christendom.

A Christian who loves only his denomination, or chiefly his denomination, has misinterpreted Christ; the Christian's heart must be big enough to include all Christendom—the Protestant must include the Catholic whether the Catholic includes him or not. Jesus selected a people whom the Jews hated when in his exposition of the word neighbour, he gave the parable of the good Samaritan. Jesus said, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' The bigness of his heart included those who denied him, those who doubted him, those who crucified him,—all. We dare not be contented to fall short of loving all Christians if we would follow him.

'As I have loved you' is one of those significant phrases that characterized the speech of Jesus. Said Frederick W. Robertson, 'There was everything to shake his trust in humanity. The Pharisees called him Good Master, and were circumventing him all the while. The people shouted hosannas, and three days afterward were shrieking for his blood. One disciple who had dipped in the same dish, and had been trusted with his inmost counsels, betrayed and deceived him; another was ashamed of him; three fell asleep while he was preparing for death,—all forsook him. Yet nothing is more surprising than that unshaken, I had well-nigh said *obstinate*, trust with which he clung to his hopes of our nature, and believed in the face of demonstration.' We are his followers. Let us apply this same principle to the Christians of other denominations. There is a power in this beyond anything the world has seen. Are we prepared to experiment in this?

The differences among Christians are not in forms of baptism, methods of confirmation, creeds, priesthood, and polities, which are commonly given as differences, but the differences lie in whether we have followed Jesus in loving, whether we love denominationally or love Christianly. It is largely an unexplored world from which our denominationalism has caused us to shy. Scientists are exploring into the stratosphere to discover whether the universe is dying or whether it is immortal. It is the Christian's day of opportunity for exploration in Christian adventure to prove whether Jesus is real—whether Christianity is dying or is immortal. It can only be done by showing Jesus in our person. Farrar said, 'If you do not love your brother, however tremendous the truths which you utter with your lips,

your Christianity is heathendom, and the kingdom of God is not within you. . . . A religion which thinks to please God either by orthodox formulæ or ceremonial observances without charity is no better than blasphemy.' Jesus said, 'Love is the fulfilment of the law'. Without Brotherhood Protestantism will perish from the earth, as well as Christianity in general.

Equality and Brotherhood is a description of what the Christian Unity League stands for—Equality before God and Brotherhood among Christians. The League had its beginning, first in a preliminary meeting, at Emmanuel Protestant Episcopal Church and then its first conference at the First Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, in 1928. Since then it has held conferences in Linwood Church, Kansas City (1929), St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church and Union Theological Seminary, New York (1929), the Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Cleveland (1931), and St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Protestant Episcopal Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis (1932). In these conferences the opening service, covering the entire session, is devoted to prayer. In prayer we see our brothers behind the flimsy barriers of our denominationalism. At the closing service the Lord's supper is celebrated with representatives from all denominations taking part, thereby breaking down, by practical demonstration, the ugly sectarian attitudes that have surrounded this beautiful and reconciling ordinance. Perhaps, in the celebration of the Lord's supper we may rediscover the Cross. Following Jesus meant suffering in primitive times; it may mean suffering again.

Both Equality and Brotherhood are carefully defined in a Pact of Reconciliation, which is divided into three brief sections. The first contains the affirmation of belief in a united Christendom, which most Christians believe and which most Christians could sign; the second is a challenging call to make personal practice square with the principles of equality of all Christians before God, which, in some instances, clashes with the denominational superiority complex of many of us; and the third is a pledge of brotherhood to all Christians, which is, by far, the most revolutionary and difficult of all in that it demands a change in our individual prejudices and indoctrinations and sets up a practice that is quite foreign to our present day Christian custom. The Pact is an interpretation of what Jesus meant when he said, 'One is your teacher and you are all brethren'. It has been signed by thousands of free and unafraid Christians in nearly all of our 215 communions, including Protestant Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Reformed, Disciples, and others.

The Pact is as follows :—

> 'We, Christians of various churches, believing that only in a co-operative and united Christendom can the world be Christianized, deplore a divided Christendom as being opposed to the Spirit of

Christ and the needs of the world. We, therefore, desire to express our sympathetic interest in and prayerful attitude toward all conferences, small and large, that are looking toward reconciliation of the divided Church of Christ.

'We acknowledge the equality of all Christians before God and propose to follow this principle, as far as possible, in all our spiritual fellowships. We will strive to bring the laws and practices of our several communions into conformity with this principle, so that no Christian shall be denied membership in any of our churches, nor the privilege of participation in the observance of the Lord's supper, and that no Christian minister shall be denied the freedom of our pulpits by reason of differences in forms of ordination.

'We pledge, irrespective of denominational barriers, to be brethren one to another in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, whose we are and whom we serve.'

'This was something definitely new in the Christian unity movement,' writes Dr. Morrison in *The Christian Century*, Chicago. 'It was an attempt to free the movement from the cumbersome method of trying to unite denominations that are not ready to unite. This method has been unfruitful because it always involved a threshing over of old theological and historical straw, and kept the essential problem from emerging into the light. The essential and primary problem of Christian unity is neither theological nor ecclesiastical. It is a problem in Christian morality. The solution of the problem will not be found in a common creed nor in a common polity, but in a common ethic—an ethic which reflects the mind of Christ and which will, therefore, cause the re-examination of our churchly practices to discover whether these practices are unbrotherly and unchristian and, therefore, contrary to the mind of Christ. We shall make progress toward a united Christendom only when we cease to consider our doctrines and our orders in terms of their origin and their "proofs" and examine the moral quality of the practices which they lead us to adopt. If under cover of our doctrines and orders we find ourselves doing things which are plainly unchristian there will be no course open to us but to revise our practices at whatever cost to our doctrines and orders.'

The Christian Unity League is a Fellowship—not of churches or denominations, but of individuals in the various churches and denominations. Other movements for Christian co-operation and unity operate on the basis of officially appointed delegates from the denominations, which is altogether proper. But there is a growing sentiment in all the denominations for a united Christendom that goes far beyond the official pronouncements of the denominations. The Christian Unity League is the spokesman for this

group—the free and unafraid, who not only see the need of a united Christendom but are not afraid to experiment toward it, even though some of the brethren object to disturbing the *status quo*.

The Christian Unity League represents the religious approach to Christian unity through individual Christians by the way of Jesus in spirit and adventure. Every follower of Jesus whether in the pulpit or in the pew is needed in this cause. Do you dare to sign the Pact of Reconciliation, recognizing that all Christians are equal before God and pledging to be a brother to all other followers of Jesus Christ? If you do, send your name and address and your denomination on the card enclosed or without the card. Write plainly, or better still, print it. *We are looking forward to a nation-wide conference in* 1935 *attended by free and unafraid American Protestants.*

Clippings

Conditions of Future Reunion

In a long letter dated October 14, 1932, to the General Secretary of the World Conference on Faith and Order, the Rev. W. F. Carothers, Pastor of the Central Pentecostal Church, Houston, Texas, U.S.A., points out the need that sometime, somewhere and by some agency, the conditions of future reunion shall be defined to the satisfaction of the universal Christian heart and the joy of our waiting Lord. Mr. Carothers goes on to say that the New Testament reveals three stages or degrees of unity, namely (1) unity of Spirit, (2) unity of Body, and (3) unity of the Faith. Under these heads he writes:—

'(1) All Christians recognize a unity of spirit with all other Christians, regardless of denominational lines of demarcation. Now, the universality of this experience is evidence of its divine origin and dependability, but have we not overlooked its full significance? It is the very force which is moving the conferences in your great movement and in it, I respectfully submit, we have the key to the solution of the entire problem.

'(2) If we should yield to this drawing of the Spirit, nothing doubting, we should find ourselves led straightway into one another's company, which, behold, is the second stage of our goal.

'(3) Now, it is one of the functions of the Body of Christ to bring itself on to perfection (the other function being to convince the world). Once we reunite on the simple basis of a unity of spirit, we would have the right to appropriate the promises of divine aid in attaining unto the final stage of unity, that of the faith. We should unite in the one Body because we are of the one Spirit, looking to the charismatic ministry of that divinely appointed Body to eliminate error, to defend and propagate truth, to promote order and

discipline and to evangelize the world. Yea, I submit, we have neither reason nor right to expect the divided Body to be able to bring us into the unity of the faith with any more success than it is now bringing the world under conviction.

'We are reversing the divine order when endeavouring, while yet in our divided, rebellious state, to find a path into organic unity via the unity of the faith. We were never justified in separating because of differences of doctrine or polity, unmixed with sin. Only impenitent sin justifies (and it demands) separation. We are not justified, therefore, in remaining apart because of those differences. Having verified our essential oneness in the Spirit, we should forthwith reunite, errors and all, confidently trusting the ministry of the Church of God, under Him, to bring us finally unto the unity of the faith.

'I recognize that practical problems of great difficulty would attend our reunion upon even this direct and simple basis, but they are of a distinctly different type from those pertaining to the divine truths involved in the unity of the faith. Furthermore, being approached by conferences from a reunited Body, these practical problems would be much more susceptible of resolution than are those touching the faith, especially when approached, as now, by representatives of our several groups.'

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